

have a simple choice: We can act now to protect these forests, or we can stand by and watch them burn. Secretaries Norton and Veneman delivered to Congress a legislative package that meets our responsibility to reduce fire risks quickly in high-priority areas, and I am very pleased that this pro-

posal was introduced in the House of Representatives today. There is bipartisan agreement that public lands of the West are desperately in need of active management efforts to restore forest and rangeland health. I call upon Congress to act upon this urgent priority as quickly as possible.

## Remarks at a Reception for Heads of United Nations General Assembly Delegations in New York City *September 12, 2002*

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Laura and I appreciate you all coming. It's an honor to be with you tonight. I want to apologize for the photo line taking so long. I'm the person to blame; I talked too much. But thank you for coming. I appreciate so very much all the Presidents who are here and the Prime Ministers who are here and the Foreign Ministers who are here, the Ambassadors to U.N. who are here.

I want to thank my citizens from our country who are here. I appreciate John Negroponte, the Ambassador to the United Nations. I want to thank the Members of the United States Congress who are here. I see one, two, three, four, five—they're everywhere. These guys know a good free meal when they see one. *[Laughter]*

I especially want to say a word of praise to Kofi Annan, who is the Secretary-General of the United Nations, for his strong leadership and his good heart and his decency. I enjoy working with him a lot. He's a class act, as we say in the State of Texas, and I know you all agree with me in that.

We gather tonight here in a place—right next to a place of great tragedy and great sorrow. And we also gather in a garden of great hope and renewal. From this room, we can view the empty space where these magnificent towers once stood and remember those who perished one year and one day ago. And in this room, we see and

feel the common commitment of our nations to build a better world, to work hard to see to it that good can overcome evil.

Ever since it opened in 1988, the Winter Garden has been one of New York's most beautiful public spaces, a place where people gathered to hear music and view art against the backdrop of one of the world's greatest skylines. September the 11th, in just a few moments, that skyline was a scene of fire and murder. This atrium was filled with steel and glass, and history turned a page. Scores of nations lost citizens that day. And in the 366 days since, scores of nations have committed themselves to confronting and combating the threat of global terror.

Our nations have enjoyed—have employed the powers of law enforcement, of diplomacy, military force, and financial controls to bring justice—not to seek revenge but to bring justice—and to prevent further attacks. Much has been accomplished, and it's important to remember much remains to be done. On behalf of the people of the United States, on behalf of the good people of this land, I want to thank every nation that has joined us in this great global struggle.

The terrible losses of September the 11th are close to our thoughts tonight, but so are the common hopes of our nations for a better world, a world beyond terror. And again, this room is a powerful symbol

of these hopes. In one short remarkable year, the Winter Garden has been reborn. The speed and success of this rebuilding effort is a testament to the optimism and determination of the people of New York and the people of the world. More than one million pounds of marble for this building was quarried in Italy and Spain. As one quarry official stated, "We didn't consider this a job. It was a duty."

Now the world is called to urgent duties. We're called upon to reaffirm great founding purposes of the United Nations, universal standards of human dignity, and a global system of peace and security. We're

called to confront great challenges to these ideals, from poverty and disease to terror and the aggression of tyrants.

By our determination, by our faith, by cooperation, we can and we will meet these tests. And by our efforts, we will lift the lives of people on every continent.

Thank you all for coming tonight. May God bless your countries, and may God bring peace to the world.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 p.m. in the Winter Garden at the World Financial Center.

## Remarks Prior to Discussions With Central African Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City *September 13, 2002*

*The President.* Thank you all for coming. First, I'm honored to be able to meet with my colleagues from Central Africa. The Secretary of State and I look forward to a very frank and constructive dialog about how to continue our common pursuit against terror and how we will work together to promote prosperity. I look forward to a constructive dialog. So thank you all for coming.

Before we begin our discussion, let me answer a few questions. Are the interpreters working right now? They are? Yours isn't working, okay. Before we begin our dialog, I'm going to take three questions from the American press corps, starting with Mr. Fournier [Ron Fournier], who writes for the Associated Press.

### *President Saddam Hussein of Iraq*

Q. Thank you, sir. Knowing what you know about Saddam, what are the odds that he's going to meet all your demands and avoid confrontation?

*The President.* I am highly doubtful that he'll meet our demands. I hope he does,

but I'm highly doubtful. The reason I'm doubtful is, he's had 11 years to meet the demands. For 11 long years he has basically told the United Nations and the world he doesn't care. And so, therefore, I am doubtful but, nevertheless, made the decision to move forward to work with the world community. And I hope the world community knows that we're extremely serious about what I said yesterday and we expect a quick resolution to the issue. And that's starting with quick action on a resolution.

Randy [Randy Mikkelsen, Reuters].

### *United Nations Resolution*

Q. Yes, sir, how soon are you expecting the resolution from the United Nations? In a week, month, days?

*The President.* As soon as possible.

Q. And how—what kind of deadline would you perceive within that resolution?

*The President.* Well, there will be deadlines within the resolution. Our chief negotiator for the United States, our Secretary of State, understands that we must have